

Application No. 10/663,481
Amendment dated January 20, 2006
Reply to Office Action of December 29, 2006

Docket No. 1232-4540US1

REMARKS

Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of this application in view of the foregoing amendment and following remarks.

Status of the Claims

Claims 1-14 and 35-42 are pending in this application. Claims 1 and 35 are independent. Claims 1, 7, 8, 10, 12, 13, 35, 41 and 42 stand rejected. Claims 2-6, 9, 11, 14 and 36-40 are objected to. By this amendment, claims 2, 9 and 36 are cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer. Claims 1, 3, 7, 35 and 37 are amended. No new matter has been added by this amendment.

Rejections

In paragraph four (4) of the Office Action, claims 1, 7, 12, 13, 35 and 42 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as allegedly being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,552,829 to Maciey et al. ("Maciey").

In paragraph six (6) of the Office Action, claims 8 and 41 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Maciey in view of U. S. Patent No. 6,181,442 to Ogura ("Ogura").

In paragraph seven (7) of the Office Action, claim 10 has been allegedly unpatentable over Maciey in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,731,661 to Nagano ("Nagano").

Allowable Subject Matter

In paragraph eight (8) of the Office Action, claims 2-6, 9, 11, 14 and 36-40 have been objected to, i.e., indicated as allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

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In response, claims have been amended as shown above addressing these objections. For example, independent claim 1 has been amended so as to include the limitations of allowable claim 2. Other independent claim 35 has been amended so as to include the limitations of allowable claim 36. Additionally, claim 7 has been amended to recite the elements of claims 1 and 9 in an independent form.

In view of the amendments as indicated above, Applicants believe that all of the pending claims are allowable over the cited art of records (i.e., Maciey, Ogura and Nagano), either taken alone or in combination, for at least the reasons as stated in the Office Action (i.e., examiner's statement of reasons for allowance at pages 6 and 7).

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections of claims 1, 7, 8, 10, 12, 13, 35, 41 and 42 under 35 U.S.C. §§102, 103 is respectfully requested.

Applicants have not individually addressed the rejections of the dependent claims because Applicants submit that the independent claims from which they respectively depend are in condition for allowance as set forth above. Applicants however reserve the right to address such rejections of the dependent claims should such be necessary.

Applicants believe that the application is in condition for allowance and such action is respectfully requested.

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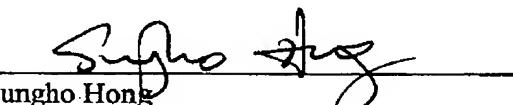
AUTHORIZATION

No petitions or additional fees are believed due for this amendment and/or any accompanying submissions. However, to the extent that any additional fees and/or petition is required, including a petition for extension of time, Applicants hereby petition the Commissioner to grant such petition, and hereby authorizes the Commissioner to charge any additional fees, including any fees which may be required for such petition, or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 13-4500 (Order No. 1232-4540US1). A DUPLICATE COPY OF THIS SHEET IS ENCLOSED.

An early and favorable examination on the merits is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,
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Dated: January 20, 2006

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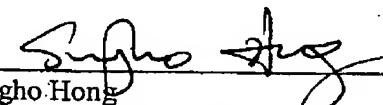
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